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ADDRESSES

OF

REV. DRS. WM. HAGUE AND E. N. KIRK,

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE

EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION

FOR

FREEDMEN,

7586.145

AT THE OLD SOUTH CHURCH,

MAY 28, 1863.

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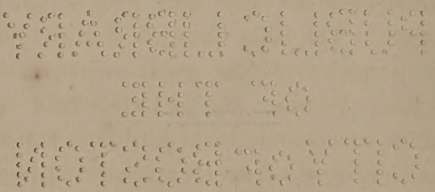

7586.145

ADDRESS OF REV. DR. HAGUE.

THE existence of this Commission, and the Report of its first year's work that has just been read, indicate a profound sense of the intimate connection between our welfare as a nation and our treatment of that oppressed race which the Slave Power has naturalized to this continent.

In this connection, it is well worthy of our notice that the period through which we are now passing is not the first in human history wherein a people's treatment of the "Race-Question" has proved to be the pivot of their national destiny. The fortunes of Judea long vibrated upon this turning point. It is a truth clearly brought to view by Dr. J. Addison Alexander, in the introduction to his two volumes of "Critical Notes on the Book of Isaiah," that in the age of that prince of prophets there were already two well-defined parties agitating the country and the church, the conflicting elements of which had long existed within the realm of Israel. The main question that divided them, and that really underlay all the great controversies of those times, was this: Whether the acknowledged superiority of the Abrahamic race should be regarded as temporary and as deriving its chief worth from its ministering to the elevation of *all the races* through the Messiah, or regarded as an end of intrinsic worth in itself, to be preserved by the nation's religious isolation and perpetuated for its own sake. Hence sprang the contest that raged from the days of Isaiah until the armies of Vespasian trod the grandeur of Jerusalem in

ashes beneath their feet. It was the grand design of the Prophet to curb the bigotry of the old conservatives and enlarge the popular mind by loftier ideas of the nation's calling. He rendered himself obnoxious to the royal censure by the fidelity and force with which he showed that the nation had never been called and separated from the rest of the world for any intrinsic merits of its own, but for the sake of a glorious mission to mankind, to be realized after the advent of the Messiah in "the fulness of time." When that predicted Messiah appeared and set forth his mission as a mission from the Father to *all the races* or kindreds of man alike, his doctrine gave mortal offence to the rulers. They hated the very thought that the "old wall of partition" should be thus "broken down," and they committed the nation against the leading idea of the Messianic era. It was then that the continuance of this Jewish nationality became an offence against Heaven and Humanity; and so, Jesus of Nazareth, as he sat upon Mount Olivet, a few days before his crucifixion, foretold its speedy and entire extinction. The Hebrew Commonwealth and Church was, in his sight, a body without life; and, therefore, with tears that were signs of patriotic feeling, he exclaimed, "Where the carcase is, there shall the eagles be gathered together." There were some that heard those words who lived to see that "body politic," that glorious old nationality, torn limb from limb and scattered abroad over almost the whole earth's area, from the tropics to the poles, where the fragments now lie ("*disjecta membra*"), memorials of the eternal truth that the government or the nation that will not yield its service in furthering our Messiah's world-wide mission to humanity, deserves to be smitten by his "iron sceptre," and to be "dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel."

As it was of old, in Judea, so is it now in America: the main political and religious question which racks the nation

through and through, is the *Race-Question*. The analogy is exact. The form which this question now takes on, may be stated almost in the same words, namely: Whether that acknowledged Caucasian superiority wherein this people glory, should be regarded as temporary, and as deriving its chief worth from its ministry to the elevation of all the races through the Messiah, or regarded as an end to be preserved by keeping up the partition-wall of political caste, and perpetuated for its own sake? This is the great ordeal-question of our era. There are many whose pride of Caucasian blood is akin to that of the ancient conservative Jew touching *his* Abrahamic lineage. They would maintain its political supremacy forever, by exacting forced service from the other races. This idea is directly antagonistic to the truly catholic aim of Christianity, which is to uplift the down-trodden and to "exalt the low" by its kindly ministries. It was in view of this broad, humane catholicity, that Paul said he knew not even the Messiah as a Jew, or "after the flesh" (2 Cor. v. 16). Just so we know Him not as Caucasian, but as human. Whatsoever of superiority pertains to the Caucasian race is to be made subservient to the blessing and uplifting of *all* the races, or else this race be left with selfish, introverted passions, to prey with suicidal greed upon its own life-blood.

The moral bearing of this race-question upon our fortunes as a people, was earnestly discussed by our fathers in the early days of the nation's infancy. Our duty to the colored race in our land, what things should be attempted on their behalf, what should be done with them, were among the chief topics of debate during the first third of this century. The general answer to the main question which these topics suggested, the answer that expressed the Christian and philanthropic sentiment of the country, was contained in this proposition: Voluntary, gradual emancipation, in connection with the opening of new fields of action for the freed-

men within the territories of our colonies in Africa. These words set forth the popular answer to the practical inquiry touching our duty to the colored race that was given by the generation that has passed away — the generation whose leadership was signalized at the commencement and the close of its career by the names of THOMAS JEFFERSON, the first Presidential patron of the American Colonization Society, and of HENRY CLAY, its former President. These men represented the prevailing sentiment of the country, north and south, in regard to the deadly evil inherent in the slave relation, and to the *temporary*, provisional continuance of the Slave Power. What that prevailing sentiment was, the accepted style of its expression, may be learned from the statements of a distinguished Virginian, one of the founders of the Colonization Society, in a public address for the furtherance of that enterprise. After freely avowing himself a slaveholder, he said: "But I hold it due to candor to say, that if there be a statesman in the United States, and I believe there are two or three such, who is content that we shall always hold them in servitude, and would advise us to rest contented with them, us and our posterity, without seeking or accepting means of liberating ourselves and them, he deserves a heavier vengeance than the orator's bile; the curses of America *counselled to her ruin*, and of outraged Africa. Let me not be considered harsh; for inasmuch as the piratical trader for human beings on the African coast, the master of the slave-ship, is the most detestable of monsters in action, so, I must say, is the advocate by cool argument of slavery in the abstract, odious in thought."*

The men who spake thus and who acted together as a Society, cherished sanguine hope of gradually lifting from this country the burden of the slave system. It was a noble work. It seemed for a time to command universal sympa-

* African Repository, Sept., 1830, p. 208.

thy. But how was it balked? Whence came the first effective blow that was aimed at its breast?

Does any one suppose that the first blow came from Northern Abolitionism? That assertion has been often made, but it is incorrect. The Journals of American Colonizationism contain remonstrances and appeals against a rising power that met it with menaces, denounced its benevolence as mock philanthropy, and plotted its overthrow before Abolitionism at the north had taken form, and even before the name of "The Liberator" had been pronounced within the realm of the Slave Power.

Perhaps it may be said that this opposition to gradual emancipation came first from "the South" itself. But then it may be replied that Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Louisiana, the most zealous supporters of the Colonization Society, constituted "the South;" and that in union with the North, at the old homestead of the Society in Washington, they imparted a sort of nationality to the work of building up the empire of Liberia, then in the flush of youthful life. It would not convey, therefore, a truthful impression of the facts to say that "the South" was the parent of this antagonism.

From what source, then, did it come? Our answer is that the first movement against this enterprise of gradual emancipation signalizes the appearance of a new political power within the borders of "the South," but which "the South" itself was scarcely aware of and had not yet recognized. This new Power was the South Carolina School of Politicians, who boldly struck for the doctrine of perpetual slavery as the true basis of social order, the corner-stone of a Caucasian Commonwealth. In the year 1827, these men boldly denounced the Colonization Society as an instrument in the hands of Northern fanatics to destroy the domestic institutions of the South, "as murderous in its principles, and as tending inevitably to the destruction of the public

peace." Although in the year 1820 Dr. Meade had visited South Carolina as the agent of the Society, and reported, on his return, that he had been well received, yet when it was seen that *voluntary emancipation* was following in the train of colonization, the success of the Society awakened that "desperate and malignant spirit" which moved forthwith to arrest its progress.

Such was the beginning of that new Political Power, that South Carolina school of statesmanship, which may be properly designated "the Young South." Its rise, progress and deadly antagonism to the doctrines of "the South," properly so called, that is the Old South, are clearly set forth in the first article of the African Repository for September, 1830, entitled "South Carolina opinions of the Colonization Society." Thirty-three years ago that article was printed at Washington, and elucidates so well the relations of the race-question at that time, that it may be fairly regarded now as exhibiting a salient point of American history.

That article has been fresh on our memory from the time of its publication. It is closed by a solemn appeal to the foes of emancipation, and says, "Such men have more to do than to counteract the efforts of our Society; few and feeble even in the States of the South, they must gird themselves for warfare against all the friends of virtue and liberty, of man and of God!"

Those words of warning were unheeded. How awfully verified are they at this hour! That young school of South Carolina statesmanship, with a zeal worthy of a better cause, by degrees gained over to its side the sisterhood of Southern States, and became an acknowledged leadership. Its answer to the great question of the age as to what should be done with the colored race, was simply this: "Enslave it forever!" It moved forward with rapid strides in its bad career, until it fired upon the national flag at Fort Sumter; and in the thunder of that first gun we heard God's

voice sounding forth, in answer to the question touching the destiny of the colored race, this majestic decree: Immediate Emancipation by the War-Power!

Then sprang into being this Society, or Educational Commission, called forth by Divine Providence to grapple with the new problem, What shall be done with the Freedmen? Your answer was, "Educate them to liberty; teach them to work for wages, to earn their living, and to take care of themselves." That answer has been realized in action; and the report of this first year's work is the practical solution of a national problem so momentous as to impart to the document a permanent historical value.

And now just observe, we pray you, while glancing over this retrospective survey of a certain course of events, extending from the year 1827 to the year 1863, that subtle moral connection of things whereby Divine Providence unfolds its agency in making a great good the offset of a great evil. In 1827, the New School of Pro-Slavery Politicians in South Carolina was quietly forming itself for antagonistic action against the scheme of gradual emancipation, and uttered its protest on the ground that any kind of emancipation was impracticable, the dream of visionaries and fanatics, to be resisted as an offence against the public peace; in the year 1863, the Educational Commission of Boston has quietly reported a year's work for emancipated slaves upon the soil of that same South Carolina, and announces a grand result in the words of General Saxton, "that the fixed population within our lines, upon the Sea-Islands, is now a self-sustaining and industrious community!" Surely, in the light of such a history, we may apply to that ill-fated State the saying of Him whose warnings were "despised and rejected of men," the saying that was uttered while He wept in view of the doomed metropolis of his own country: "Thou knewest not the time of thy visitation; behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

The report furnishes to us an occasion of joyous thanksgiving. Let it cheer us onward to renewed action for the year to come. Let us give ear also to the friendly voices that have just now been wafted to us across the Atlantic. This enterprise has presented to the true friends of freedom in England their first opportunity of coöperating effectively with us in behalf of a common cause. The great meeting for the formation of a Freedmen's Aid Society, which was lately held in St. James's Hall, Piccadilly, and at which Sir T. Fowell Buxton, Bart., presided, was a noble demonstration. The report which was there read by Rev. J. Curwen, indicated a most exact acquaintance with our field of labor, and an earnest desire to help us. They meant all that they said; they will "make their words good;" and we doubt not their budding promises will ripen into golden and enduring fruitage, to be garnered by the freedmen of the South, now emerging from a state of debasing bondage into a new realm of life, liberty, manhood, womanhood, virtue, knowledge, and of boundless progress in an ever-widening career of prosperity and improvement.

ADDRESS OF REV. DR. KIRK.

This oppressed people have claims on our sympathy and on our sense of right, for they have been maltreated by us.

There was once a man, who on his way to Jericho from Jerusalem, fell among thieves. They stripped him, robbed him, and bruised him. I know not that the Saviour had the Africo-Americans in view when he uttered that parable. But it is very applicable to them; for there surely was a time when they were free; and then some wretch robbed them of their inalienable rights, and consigned them to slavery, with all its terrible consequences. The Southern people have perpetuated the wrong; for they never could make the wrong a right; and the original robber never could convey a right which he himself did not possess.

We of the North have very generally participated in the wrong-doing; for we have been prejudiced against this people, and we have withholden from them the sympathy and respect due to their manhood, and to the personal worth of many of them, extending our prejudices so far as to allow no manhood even to them whose blood is five-sixth Caucasian.

We have withholden from them the benefit of those noble institutions which we prize so much as to be willing to pay a thousand million and two thousand million dollars, and a twenty years' war to maintain them. We have coldly and superciliously consented to the black man being deprived of these.

And this wickedness we have justified by confounding two very distinct propositions: "What ought I to feel?" with "What ought I to do?" — the political with the moral question. The Constitution restrained us from acting politically on the subject of slavery; but it had no authority within the domain of the conscience, or that of the heart. We still retained, under the Constitution, the right to hate injustice and oppression; to abhor slavery, and to use every moral influence for its overthrow. But we sunk by degrees into apathy of feeling and into an acquiescence in wickedness, because we could not politically oppose it. If we had lived in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, we would, on this principle, have bowed down to the great golden image at the sound of the sackbut and psaltery. We should have thought the Constitution made it necessary.

In all this we have wronged ourselves. A prejudice is more hurtful to him that entertains it than to him against whom it is indulged. And, by entertaining it in this case, we have also almost lost our country. The rebellion never would have been projected could not its leaders have counted largely upon the sympathy of the free States in their estimate of slavery and slaves. To the rebels the negroes have been invaluable as slaves. But suppose our worthy President had seen in the country a public sentiment that would have sustained him in the proclamation of freedom two years ago, where would this war have been to-day? Let us try the force of figures.

Here are 24,716,000 Union white people in the country, and 4,325,000 Union black people. There are 4,125,000 rebel whites, and perhaps not one rebel negro. Now suppose we had called the 4,325,000 black men, or one in ten of them, to meet one in ten of the 4,125,000 rebels, this would have been the state of the case: we should have set a black man to face every rebel, and then had a reserve of 20,000 black soldiers and 2,470,000 white soldiers.

God is now urging the negro's claims by his own wonderful processes. He is sweeping away prejudices with an astonishing rapidity. Who could have anticipated the Divine Wisdom in this? The white man must see the negro fighting for liberty, then he will respect him. One instance may illustrate the process now going forwerd. When the negro regiment was hard pressed in its Florida raid, a Connecticut regiment was ordered from Hilton Head to go and reinforce it. The order was received by them as simply ridiculous. But it must at last be obeyed. The Connecticut soldiers reached the place just while the black men were bravely contending against superior numbers. They saw there, not the crouching slave planting cotton under the lash, but the man defending his manhood and his country. Their prejudices were transformed into admiration. They rushed in side by side with their colored brethren, carried the day, and came out of the fight glorying in their brave companions in arms. They returned to Hilton Head joyously together. And when they landed, went arm in arm together to the house of God.

How often have we heard the exclamation within six months, "My feelings about slavery and the negro are all changed!" Thankful may the negro be; more thankful shall we be when God shall have completed this work—removing the prejudices of twenty million hearts towards an injured race.

But, can the negro fight? I will answer that inquiry by making a little catechism.

When Major Pitcairn, of the British marines, leaped on the redoubt of Bunker Hill, shouting "The day is ours," and striking terror into the colonial troops, who scaled those lips and laid the invader in the dust? Peter Salem, a negro.

When the struggling colonies were contending for American freedom at Bunker Hill, who stood side by side with our fathers? The negro.

For whom did the principal officers in that fight petition the General Court for some special token of approbation, describing him as "a brave and gallant soldier"? Salem Poor, a negro.

Whom did Samuel Lawrence, of Groton, one of our noble patriot ancestors, lead to the fight of Bunker Hill? A company of negroes.

What makes his grandson so zealous a friend of the negro? Because he is true to the sacred memories of his ancestor, who was rescued from extreme peril by the determined bravery of this same company of negroes.

Who, before our degenerate times, in the days of true patriotism, was admitted to stand in the ranks with the white man? The negro.

What Southern State, in 1775, passed an order for enrolling slaves as military laborers? South Carolina.

Who first promised freedom to all slaves who would join the British army? A British nobleman, Lord Dunmore, Governor of Virginia.

Was the proclamation of Lord Dunmore a *brutum fulmen?* It aroused the whole colony, and led the masters to promise freedom to every slave who could fight, that would stand by his master.

Who seized Major-General Prescott, chief of the royal army of Newport? Prince, a valiant negro, who knocked the door of the chamber open with his head, and then seized his victim in bed.

Which is pronounced the best fought battle of the Revolution? The battle of Rhode Island. But it was saved to us by a negro regiment that three times repelled the Hessians with a desolating fire.

When was Col. Greene murdered at Point's Bridge? Not until the enemy had laid his negro guard all dead at his side.

Why were vigorous efforts made, in the war with George

III., to enlist negroes in Georgia and South Carolina? Because there was not patriotism enough in the whites to make an army to resist the enemy.

What did Gen. Jackson say to the free negroes of Louisiana in September, 1814? "Through a mistaken policy you have heretofore been deprived of a participation in the glorious struggle for national rights. This no longer shall exist. As sons of freedom you are now called upon to defend our most inestimable blessings." In December, 1814, in another proclamation he says: "I expected much from you; for I was not uninformed of those qualities which made you so formidable to an invading foe. But you surpass my hopes. I have found united in you those qualities, that noble enthusiasm which impels to great deeds."

What does Gen. Saxton think of the negroes as soldiers, laborers, and men? That they show "as much aptitude as the white soldier; and properly led, they will do as efficient service in battle."

God is now removing the burdens that have oppressed this people, and the barriers that kept them from entering the domain of citizenship and fellowship.

The laws against teaching the negro to read are null and void on the whole Southern coast, and in at least three slave States. The political power of slave-holding is now destroyed, never to be recovered. God, indeed, is threatening to extinguish the "peculiar institution," bringing on the accomplishment of Washington's desire, "to see a plan adopted by which slavery in this country might be abolished;" not, however, "by law," as he desired, but against unrighteous legislation.

What, then, are we to do? Supply the lack of action of our Government wherever, for want of time to attend to it, they must neglect any interest. We must organize a protective system for this poor people emerging from a degrading position. Their rights must be vigilantly guard-

ed by a wise supervision. Their indigent, infirm, aged and infants must be brought under a Christian guardianship. There must be a clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, healing the sick. There must be an industrial organization; providing farms and workshops, and instruments and seeds; starting them on a new career of a fair competition of industry and skill with their white brethren. There must be educational organizations, bringing up the enslaved mind out of Egypt into the land of promise. They are eager to learn, apt to learn. They must be taught order, cleanliness, system, domestic economy. The better class of minds must have the wide door of literature, history and science and statesmanship opened to them. There must be a thorough spiritual supervision of them until they can organize their own churches and sustain their own pastors.

This we must do for Christ's sake. He loves the African; he died for him, and will welcome him to the same heaven to which we are going. This we must do for our country's sake. The body politic cannot any longer bear to have such a gangrene of ignorance, animalism and concubinage festering within it. This we must do for the world's sake. The barbarism of the United States as it was before the month of April, 1861, must now pass away forever. This we must do for our own sakes. The day is coming when the Lord will say—"I was naked, I was hungry, I was ignorant. Come, ye blessed, who pitied and relieved me. Depart, ye cursed, who despised me because I was not fair-skinned."

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